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KINGSTON ONTARIO CANADA

A LETTER

TO THE

REFORMING GENTLEMEN.

..... "Fee fau fum,
" I sinell the stink of democratic plum;
" And though I love Reforms *disclosed*,
 " And would by no means clog them;
" Yet meeting with *bare r——ps exposed*,
 " I cannot help but flog them."

BY THE OLD INQUIRER.

Bradford:

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1817.

1894. 1817. 1884.

A LETTER, &c.

Gentlemen,

You appear to the Old Inquirer to be invited by Mr. Godfrey Higgins, a Gentleman of *consummate wisdom*, and great celebrity, for building at a very small expence to the county, a superb Asylum, for himself and his near relations, (as far as a peculiar vein of mentality may be supposed to constitute relationship) upon a very natural supposition that they may shortly want it. You appear, Gentlemen, I say, to the Old Inquirer, to be solicited to thrust your noses as he (*wise man*) has done, into a business not a little calculated to give you claims to the very next rooms to his own, in this most splendid but rather expensive Asylum.

Mr. Higgins, Gentlemen, a Magistrate of the West-Riding, comes forward in a most *temperate*, modest, loyal, and in the present state of things, *sensible* address, which the Old Inquirer begs leave to introduce to the notice of the public, as in reality a most impudent and very extraordinary performance.

Mr. Higgins' Address.

Gentlemen,

A firm conviction that it is my duty, impels me to address you at this moment. I have viewed with much anxiety, for some time past, the unprecedented state of the country. Several meetings to petition Parliament for Reform, as you well know, have been called by the people.

I beseech you, Gentlemen, to consider what is your duty

on this occasion ! Is not Reform that object for which you have been long struggling ? Is it not that object, which you firmly believe can only save your country ? Is it not that object, without the attainment of which, you believe either anarchy or despotism must ensue ? Could it ever be obtained without the people ? Without that awful physical strength, in union with a general enlightened sentiment that cannot be despised ? Did you ever suppose, that the corrupt perverters of the Constitution, would on *their own suggestion*, reform themselves ? Have you not been long complaining, that the people were deaf to your call to assist in the cause of Reform ? Had it not always been your firm conviction, that sufferings, the consequences of those wretched measures you deprecated, would alone open the eyes of the public ? That it was through feeling, that the great and saving truth of Reform must be taught ? God knows, the lesson for the purpose has been severe and effectual.

Peaceably—manfully—honourably, are the people in your country coming forward, to do that for which you have so long called upon them. And now that they answer your call, Where are you ? Can you honestly—can you honourably—can you conscientiously say, you are at your post ? Are you, where God, your country, your constitution, and I may add, your *safety*, tell you you ought to be ? Admitting, in order to avoid all discussion, that the people are asking more than in your opinion can be granted with propriety—that they seem to be going farther than what is consonant to your ideas, of safe and practicable Parliamentary Reform : are not such the strongest reasons for your coming forwards to guide and lead them ? Will you sacrifice all your consistency to a cowardly pride ? Are you so ruined by the wretched system, which has been long prevailing and undermining the best principles of the Constitution, that you cannot act with the people, because they are degraded, and rendered wretched by

the very measures, against which you yourselves have been too long struggling in vain? Then, indeed, your sun is set! Then are you gone for ever.

What is more—you will deserve, for you have prepared your own fate. After this pusillanimity, never more presume to breathe a wish for independence. As you cast your eye over Spain, Italy, Poland, and South America, dare not to heave a sigh for fallen liberty. As you look at home, utter no complaints at the venality which shall have laid your Magna Charta, and your Bill of Rights prostrate at the feet of corruption. Oh! that I could rouse you from your fatal lethargy! If *I* cannot, there are events coming that soon will. And, when the blood of civil strife flows down your streets, and the best parts of your Constitution are all expiring, either in anarchy or despotism, what will be your reproaches should you be alive to make them?

Let me tell you your own belief. It is, I know it is, that you may prevent all this, if you will only peaceably and constitutionally head the people in that cause, in which you have been evidently instructing them. Be with them in the cause, and all must be well. Leave them, and how can you calculate the result? In that conduct, which will be your honour, I see, and you equally see, nothing but safety. In that conduct which will be your eternal reproach, you as well as I can behold nothing but the most appalling horrors.

If, contrary to every reasonable expectation, and after a glorious constitutional struggle, the people be finally successful without you, will you have the assurance to offer them your congratulations? Will you be able to encounter the look of reproach they cannot but make you? Let me then persuade you, countrymen! to come forward to place yourselves in the post of honour—in the gap betwixt military despotism and popular anarchy. Let me persuade you to lead the people, willing, nay, desirous to be led.

I make no apology for intruding myself upon your notice. I feel it to be the duty of every man, whatever his situation in life may be, to endeavour to rouse you from the *criminal* apathy, with which you appear to regard the people, and the progressive state of the national distress.

You view, with a just pride, the naval and military trophies of your country *abroad*; but bitter and unavailing will be your regret, if, from your own mismanagement at *home*, your heroes shall have bled, only that their children may inherit a country in slavery, its agriculture ruined, and its commerce gone.

At this moment, one-fourth of the inhabitants of England are paupers, or insolvent. How far do you expect this system to go? How long do you expect it to last?

Gentlemen, the people have been basely slandered. They are firm friends to a limited monarchy, and to the family on the throne. But they know their rights, and I sincerely believe they know their duties too.

It is said they are irritated, and their passions enflamed. Distress and excessive misery may plead their excuse—may well excuse a little animation and warmth; and where beyond this, in your county, have they gone? It is your duty to sooth and comfort them, to shew them that you are part of themselves; not to absent yourselves from their legal public meetings: but to attend them, and lead them in the paths of reason and moderation.

In calling upon you to lead, rather than be led by the people, I hope I shall convince them, that the Magistrates are not the servile venal tribe they have been erroneously represented, and that they will believe my assurance, that they are many of them the firm friends of their rights, and as much their well-wishers, as Gentlemen,

Your obedient humble Servant,

G. HIGGINS.

Skellow-Grange, Ferrybridge, Jan. 22, 1817.

When this enlightened Magistrate has bounced about for some time like a dog in a string—when he has wisely made the people into “that awful physical strength, in union with a general enlightened sentiment that cannot be despised,” which the Old Inquirer thinks must be a very queer thing: He most sagaciously finds out, that the Reform wanted is in *men*; the Constitution, therefore, pops out of the question; and here we are perfectly agreed: but, how a Magistrate, who is one of our governors, should contrive to find out, that the *only* men in England, who want reforming, are those *very governors*, whom he calls the “corrupt perverters of the Constitution,” of which, by the by, he is certainly one, we cannot so easily understand: and though we may go so far with him, as to acknowledge, that “no men will on their own suggestion reform themselves;” yet we are equally convinced, that multiply the sum of our self-menders, to the full extent of our population, and you will only increase the difficulty; and therefore the Inquirer’s plan, (for he too has a plan of Reform, which he means by and by to introduce,) he flatters himself will meet with Mr. Godfrey Higgins’ approbation.

That we are right will appear in this, that the people are already going too far, as Mr. Godfrey observes, in mending the Constitution, instead of themselves, which however is very natural: but they seem to be going farther, than a snug little faction which has been lying by for chances, intended. *They*, it should seem, would like to be appointed dry nurses to the people, that they may cajole them most kindly into *leading-strings*, and play the pretty profitable game they have once or twice played before—a nibble, or even a peep at the loaves and fishes, now and then, is not easily forgotten; but let Mr. Godfrey speak for himself, for we must honestly confess that the people in the present day want leading-strings.

Mr. Godfrey Higgins.—“Admitting that the people are

asking more than in your opinion can be granted with propriety; that they seem to be going farther than what is consonant to your ideas of safe and practical Parliamentary Reform, (*Hear him, hear him, cried Dick Honesty and Sir Benjamin*) are not such the strongest reasons for your coming forward to guide and lead them?" (*Sir Benjamin looked grave*) Mr. Godfrey proceeded, "If you will only peaceably and constitutionally *lead* the people in the cause in which you have been evidently instructing them."

"What the D—l," said *Dick Honesty*, "the cat's out of the bag again, Mr. Inquirer; and all this prose about reforming ourselves, Sir, and reforming Parliament, is a mere dust, Sir—a mere dust kicked up to conceal the views of the party; which in its full extent is neither more nor less, than to get the fat kine *out* of the verdant pastures of the Court, and the lean kine in."

Sir Benjamin Gravity relaxed into a smile, notwithstanding his inclination to rebuke his friend again for his improper language; and poor *Jerry* chuckled, and cried bravo. The *Old Inquirer* bowed assent to Mr. Godfrey, and he sneaked off, when he found the parley at an end, to join his own pretty little squad. *Jerry* whispered as he shut to the door, may good luck speed your worship well, and send you a safe deposit in the asylum.

Mr. Higgins' Address is followed by a short letter, not less pointed, to *him*, by a Reformer, dated Bradford-Moor, who may, therefore, be considered as an encourager of the celebrated petition from that place, which was not allowed even to be laid upon the table of the House of Commons, it was so very temperate, and so very becoming the loyal subjects of this realm.

To Godfrey Higgins, Esq.

Mr. Higgins,

As no set of men have played a more artificial game in Politics, than the party to which you have attached yourself, we think ourselves but little obliged to you, for being impertinent enough to attempt the stale trick of inviting the Gentlemen of your party, to put themselves at *our head*, when it evidently appears the sole object of their so doing would be, to counteract our designs, and direct our moves towards objects *immediately their own*. We are not exactly so senseless, as to be for ever duped by men, whose alliance is unnatural, and whose repeated desertion, when we have come to the point has already sufficiently evinced, that their only ardent wish is not to assist, but deceive us. "We are men, forsooth, that *must be managed*—we have shewn in fifty instances, that we are not so easily *coerced* as *cajoled*." But, Sir, with all due respect to your marvellous shrewdness, and political acumen, we have learnt so little to confide in your boasts, and your promises, that really we think, we will, for once, endeavour to do ourselves justice without you. Could we as a multitude conduct ourselves with the demeanour, becoming the magnitude and importance of our pretensions, our numbers will command respect, and we think ourselves much more likely to carry our point in the way of blunt honesty, than in alliance with knaves. We thank you, Sir, for the respectability of the *nurses* you have provided for us, but really, Sir, we feel ourselves too full grown for *leading-strings*. I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient Servant,

A REFORMER.

Bradford Common, Feb. 4th, 1817.

The next thing that we shall notice, Gentlemen, is a rather bulky shilling pamphlet, from the not very stable, though

perhaps, misnamed weathercock at Farnley Hall, which he calls the Englishman's Manual. The Old Inquirer has once before had the honour of practically contending with Mr. Fawkes to advantage. While he, no doubt, was highly gratifying his vanity, by making long speeches in the Court house at Wakefield, in favour of a Brother, whom he very naturally wished to provide for; the Old Inquirer was overturning all this sublime oratory, by getting good, sound, substantial votes for Mr. Busfield. And in the present instance, he hopes that his exertions, if not equally substantial, yet, in the annals of common-sense, at least, will be found not deficient in either weight or measure when placed in the balance; for Mr. Fawkes' bulky shilling pamphlet, appears to him to partake a good deal of some late fashions in our paper currency; in plain English, it seems to be neither more nor less than Sheffield plate, and not sterling. To pretend to understand the whole string of political texts, which Mr. Fawkes has tagged together, or clearly to distinguish in what way he means them to bear, would be as difficult as to arrange, and discipline the texts of scripture, jumbled together much in the same way by a *modest* Methodist, just now upon the Calvinistic *question*. Who understanding but little of the matter, for fear he should not say enough on the subject, has forced in, helter skelter, neck and heels, every text he could think of that approximates at all, even in sound, to the matter in debate—and contrives by this means, to be exactly as unintelligible, as the subject he is upon has remained now for nearly 1700 years. The best excuse for him is, that the subject is impenetrable, and therefore, he endeavours to cover it with a cloud of dust: but assuredly we cannot make use of the same palliation for Mr. Fawkes; page the 7th, this Gentleman boldly steps forwards, and tells us with an unblushing front, "We wish for nothing new;" if you will, however, turn, Gentlemen, to page 83 of his publication, Mr. Fawkes will inform you, "That of all

the plans he has ever seen, the one proposed by Sir Francis Burdett, appears to him the most eligible and feasible, which is,

1st, That all representation should be merged in County Elections; and here Gentlemen it is very natural to stop and ask; "Would this be *nothing new*?"

2d, "That each County should be divided into districts, that the Elections should begin and terminate on one and the same day;" and here we halt again to ask, if "this would be *nothing new*?"

3th, "That persons subject to direct taxation should be Electors;" and here again we stop to say, would this indeed, Gentlemen, "be *nothing new*?"

4th, "That the duration of Parliaments should be *annual*;" and here we shall make our last pause, to ask once more, if "this would be *nothing new*?" The Old Inquirer feels much obliged to Mr. Fawkes, for the polite attempt to make the old Gentleman with decayed faculties forget the years that are past, that he may feel himself renewed in youthful vigour; but he is, notwithstanding, fully convinced that Mr. Fawkes' way of proving his position, can only be by the sweeping and decisive assertion, that "there is *nothing new* under the sun." I am not, indeed, convinced from any thing I have met with in the *pamphlet* in question, that Mr. Fawkes is gifted with either the discriminating powers, or the patient investigation requisite for any very deep inquiry into the subject. Yet we cannot but crave his attention to a few questions; as we believe they will tend, and that directly, to clear up some difficulties with which he has involved the premises. And pray, Gentlemen, in the first place, what happy result could you expect from extending the Elective Franchise to every person paying direct taxes? Have we not had a sufficient warning in the French Revolution, and are not the evils of democracy, the murders, the robberies, and the thefts around

us, which we certainly fairly attribute in part, to the virulent resolves and Petitions which we have seen already bandied about in the public papers; are not these evils alone sufficient to prove, that the Elective Franchise ought by no means to be lowered, except you wish to throw us into that horrid state of society, which Mirabeau so aptly characterizes by the tooth ache? I believe, Gentlemen, that after all the ridiculous bits of prose which Mr. Fawkes has so absurdly tagged together, and offered to the public, few of you who have been for years careful observers of the progress of opinions, as well as events, will have the hardihood to deny, that the Liberty of the subject has been gradually increasing from the time of Edward the Sixth, and that it is at this moment, taking a wider range than it was ever known to do in this kingdom. General Liberty, Gentlemen, has during my long life been regularly progressive; and I am sorry to say, it is now getting too much into a *system* of licentiousness, calculated either to throw us back within the grasp of a standing army and an absolute Monarch, or into the most horrid extensive quagmire, from which it will be difficult to reach any solid foundation, even should we flee to the shores of a democratic republic. Is it indeed so very desirable, that the devil should again plough up our happiness, and run rough shod over old England? And are you to be the men, to sign a requisition to the high Sheriff, to invite us, with our eyes still staring upon the destruction of Europe, and even while panic struck by no very slight electric shock from the thunders of destruction, which have hardly ceased to roll—to divest our heads of common sense, and in spite of these warnings, to place them within the devil's range, and let him have another more tremendous crash than ever, to gratify once more his hungry maw? No, Gentlemen, let us if you please, consider a little, let us think a little about this petitioning, before we proceed any further.

A late Major in the 1st West York Militia, was a man with many peculiarities about him, as some of you may probably recollect. Whenever he saw a shabby looking fellow cap in hand, bowing in his approach, and looking lackadaisical, Aha! my friend, said the Major, sideling off like a game cock that's shy of fighting, I have got a sore spot here—clapping his hand upon his breeches' pocket; not that there was any deficiency in the Major's breeches' pockets, but as Hudibras says:—

Granting that he had much wit,
He was rather shy of using it.

But it is at this moment to the *empty* breeches' pockets that I more particularly wish to allude: and first, let us enquire what connexion there is betwixt an empty breeches' pocket, and a political petition—Now, Gentlemen, I must honestly confess to you, that amongst the great Petitioners of my acquaintance, the Gentlemen with empty pockets seem to take the lead. In the first place, I count 1, 2, 3, men of desperate fortunes; and

One, two, three, four,
Who can hardly sink lower;
And one, two, three, more
Who are all very poor.

Now, though I have nothing to say about a certain *reforming* Major's breeches' pockets, who I understand has been very busy amongst us, nor should I like to venture the smallest conjecture about the breeches' pockets of a petitioning Justice, much less would I calculate the profundity of those of a reforming weathercock. Yet am I very much afraid from the depth of those we are all well acquainted with, that as the complexion of matters now stands, the Petition from the respectable County of York, will be bandied about by the name of the "Breeches pocket petition." But there is a something to my mind, even more degrading than this, Gentlemen. For

really if you should be foolish enough to call the rabble of this large County together, at the instigation of a few half witted fellows, it will probably deserve the name of the pick pocket petition; and those who put themselves in old Major F——'s attitude of defence, will stand the best chance to escape a scouring.

To illustrate still further, therefore, the breeches' pocket system. One of the Royal Dukes some years ago, as story tells, when animal magnetism was the rage, commenced philosopher; and what, Gentlemen, could be more laudable than a Royal Duke metamorphosed into a Philosopher? A party was selected in which he was to treat the visitors with one of his princely exhibitions in animal magnetism.

I am the Prince's Dog at Kew,
Whose Dog are you?

for any thing the Inquirer knows, might be the animal made use of upon the occasion; but unfortunately, one of the queer whims of a well known Dean, of philosophic memory, from certain modifications of matter and motion which we are unacquainted with, threw his equally queer intellect into a ludicrous position, and made it witty. He contrived, unobserved, to let the dog smell at, nay actually see, if not taste, a crust, which he had wickedly deposited in his pocket for this very purpose; and when the Royal Duke was just upon the *long stroke* which was to put the animal's nerves completely into motion, and all was expectation, the crafty Dean contrived to move his pocket—the Prince's dog at Kew pricked his ears with an arch leer, exactly in tune to the Dean's expectations. Nobody understood this piece of coquetry but the Dean; unfortunately, however, such was the effect upon the Very Reverend himself, that he could not help extending his wide mouth into a broad grin. The Royal Duke was one of the first to smoke the joke; he was at first chagrined, but collecting himself, he very politely pocketed

the affront, by joining in a loud laugh at the expense of animal magnetism. But this all goes to prove, that the vibratory motion in a poor man's head, as well as a dog's, may be easily raised by the ideas or the scent of a full breeches-pocket.—Now the Devil in Divan determined to avail himself of this. “You queer, little, old, wrinkled, bandy-legged, son of a b——, in the green plush night-cap and old drab coat—you, Mr. Mammon,” said the Devil; for he always honors them in Divan with their appropriate epithets—“you are the man of wax just now, for making a diversion in our behalf, in that highly-favoured Land, where I have of late been so much perplexed—that hated Island seems evidently designed to fulfil the prophecies, and spread the everlasting Gospel to our hurt; let us not be idle, go directly, my honest little fellow, and see what can be done, and be sure you don't forget the yellow canvass bag, my Honey.” Mammon bowed submission, and the whole Divan rang with roars of rude acclamation. And this, Gentlemen, I take it, is quite sufficient to explain, most *metaphysically*, the hurly-burly we have got into. Old Mammon, with that spirit of deception essential to devilism, is at this moment pointing out to the poor in their distress, the breeches pockets of the rich as full, which we certainly know to be in reality empty; and to make the farce more complete, Mr. Godfrey Higgins and his fry of simpletons, ambitious, no doubt, of attaining to an early residence in his splendid mansion, carry on the joke by persuading our poor countrymen, who certainly must be as ignorant as Hottentots to be persuaded by such fellows, that Parliamentary Reform is Greek, or at furthest Hebrew; for a division of the contents of these said rich breeches-pockets amongst the poor, and the best promise these honest souls can make *us*, who always look before we leap, is, forsooth, to get the Old Whigs, Pharaoh's lean kine, once again into power, to grind us worse than ever.

But there is yet, Gentlemen, another point evidently to be considered. We are to be called together to cure the transient evils, which have chiefly arisen from the vices of our paper currency, and overstrained speculation—by petitioning Parliament, for nobody knows what, say the York petitioners—for we disagree upon that to a man.

For annual Parliaments, County Elections, and that every man who pays direct taxes may have a vote, says Mr. Fawkes; That a number of rotten boroughs should be disfranchised, and their representation transferred to such towns as Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield, say the Whigs. That every member would go to chapel, and say his prayers with real devotion every morning, during the sitting of Parliament, and keep the Devil and his old dirty friend in the green plush night-cap, if possible, from skulking into the house, betwixt the Speaker's legs, or under his coat laps, says the Old Inquirer.

Under such a division of opinion, is a County Meeting desirable? "I know," said *Sir Benjamin Gravity*, "that the Old Inquirer wishes for a Reform in Parliament." "True," replied the *Inquirer*, "but it should be taken up by Britons in peaceable times, with firmness and consideration; do not tell me that nothing can be done but in turbulent times. Britons when *united* by petition, will prevail with the Supreme Being himself in every thing that is proper; and here is nothing else, when thus united, that *will* resist their petitions; they have no need to make use of sinister methods to carry their point—they have no need of Foreign aid, but their march against corruption should be solemn, firm, and steady to the point, yet loyal like the charge of the English bayonet, and then all obstacles must fall before the old song of "God save the King." But what man of sense, what true patriot will have any thing to do with a little piddling manœuvring faction, who are agreed in nothing, and whose confederating band is in consequence of this a rope of sand, and whose very success could

only plunge their country into anarchy. A faction, who have ambition enough to hold the Sovereign in leading-strings, and yet have not the sense to conduct themselves with the decorum due to every petty Magistrate.

Gentlemen, the Inquirer wishes in conclusion, to remind once more the real friends of the Constitution, of the huge fiddle with many strings, upon which the Old Gentleman has been so fond of playing of late. Now the favourite propensity of every man is the string upon which the D—l likes to play. He begins with his tweedle dum, tweedle dee, tweedle, tweedle, tweedle, till the favourite propensity begins to vibrate, (how does he get every string into tune, exclaimed *Lick Honesty* aloud) this is not the time for settling that, rejoined the Inquirer calmly. It is sufficient to say, that a certain Baronet's favourite propensity has been observed of late to be getting a little into vibration; we will, therefore, take the liberty of proposing him as an instance in elucidating our subject. Now, Sir F. has his attendant doctor—his apothecary—his lawyer—his attorney—his banker—and amongst the rest, his parish priest—his land agents—his friseur—his butler—his coachman—and even down to his little jack of the boots, *who have all breeches' pockets*, and all would consequently observe the opportunity afforded by the vibration of Sir Frank's favourite propensity, for they all live well by tickling this.

Very low bends the Doctor, and most cordially shakes the Baronet by the hand. Why my dear Sir, you astonished us all. The Parson rubs up his vast store of erudition to enhance the compliment, and not one of the whole squad, not excepting little Jack himself, but smiled applause the very next time he met Sir Frank's attention, and all this is echoed from the fair lips of the ladies too. Upon my word, Sir Frank, I understand you acquitted yourself admirably well; all united to assure him, notwithstanding *his fits of stuttering*, that the speech was absolutely unparalleled. Now

what is there in mortal man to bear up against all this buffoonery ; what chance is there that Sir Frank should not be gulled eventually at least by the Devil? No matter what riots, what picking of pockets, what murders, and finally, what exhibitions at the New Drop, such like speeches, echoed and re-echoed by the Mercury, may be the cause of—another grand classical oration must be dried, cut, and got ready ; Sir Frank's favorite propensity is in full vibration again, and the Devil has nothing to do but to wait in patience till he may grin anew at the mischief he has done.

Be it once for all understood, that the Old Inquirer only mentions Sir Frank's as a case of general application amongst the admirers of sound, instead of sense. He means no reflection upon the Baronet's personal oratory,* but upon all the oratory of all the orators who address the corrupt passions of mankind, merely to gratify their own vanity or ambition, or to serve the pernicious purposes of a party. He is well convinced, that many lives have already fallen a sacrifice to this folly.

Quamquam delirant reges plectuntur Achivi.

It might have been a pretty little Lordling, as he once remembers Lord Milton, that was thus charmingly caressed, or even Lord Lascelles himself, with his broad brim and stick in hand, if he would condescend to let the Devil tickle him a little. Whether the old strings of the weathercock can be brought into vibration again, and be made to join in the chorus, it matters not ; we have traced all the moves to one common parent—and he's a *black one*.

* The Old Inquirer is not very guilty of paying compliments ; he will, however, venture one, so near in affinity to truth, as to pass even in the presence of Dick Honesty and Sir Benjamin Gravity—"Sir Frank is not formed to be a *secondury* in the political world : let him move in his own sphere, and his worth and powers will be duly appreciated by all parties."

Nothing can be clearer to my mind than that, if Government did not interfere upon those occasions, there would be mischief. A bad Faction is at work, confessedly bad, even in profession Infidels. Another Squad, some of which, at least, profess to be honest, is next to them in activity; their *secret motive* is to *manage* the first, so as to make it a stepping stone towards their own object. The first, on the other hand, is well aware of all this, and goes on playing its own game, and saying, whenever it speaks out—"Very well, be it so; dupe that dupe can."

The respectable members of society, who constitute what may be properly called the body of the people, keep aloof from both Factions, and suffer them to carry their schemes to alarming lengths, before they interfere—they rely upon Government for every thing, and Government in this instance has not deceived them; indeed the safety of the one is identified with the safety of the other—if Government falls, the people must likewise fall. If Government did not interfere upon these occasions, the popular party must eventually prevail; they would drive their Leaders, sarcastically yclep'd their Nurses, under specious pretexts, to the brink of the Tarpeian Rock; and when once they had them thus completely in their power, they would, without remorse, send their quondam deceivers to the bottom. Mr. Fox would have been no more able to stem the torrent, than *such* great men as Mr. Higgins. Pitt saved Fox; and the Right Hon. Old Nicholas must give security to the eloquent Justice, cock sure as he may be of his game, for a future safe residence in his own Asylum. Where would Wesley, the leader of even a religious body, have now been, had he lived to this day? In spite of all the policy he was master of, and few men exceeded him in policy, he would have been a dissenter from that church for which he professed a profound veneration, and for which he, one day, most vehemently exclaimed—"O

pray for the peace of Jerusalem!" (meaning the Church of England;) and added, "they shall prosper who love thee." He left a long paper of instructions upon a very important political subject to the Old Inquirer, which he implicitly followed, from a conviction of their rectitude; and time has proved the Old Reformer to have been exactly correct in his opinions. The loyalty of the Methodists at this day is beyond all praise; and we can only say to religious men of every description, "Go ye and do likewise:" in every thing really good we give you the right hand of fellowship, and from the heart.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to remain,

the Public's obedient servant,

THE OLD INQUIRER.

*The Hermitage, Bradford,
March 3d, 1817.*



A Requisition to every Honest Man,

In the County of York.

If the Reformers continue to agitate the County, meet them with the spirit of your Forefathers; and God bless you.

BENJAMIN GRAVITY,
RICHARD HONESTY,

ISAAC ORTHODOXY, A. M.
JERRY CARTER.

P. S. Mr. Baines, in his Paper which came out March 1st, 1817, declares, "that the People ought to *judge* their Governors:" so that we have got back to the old tune of "cashiering Kings," which brought Mr. Burke to his senses; and the French Revolution is of no avail, with all its atrocities. But who are to cashier Kings? Mr. Baines plainly intimates a majority of the People: but in the first place, a majority of the People happen to be Infants; and in the second, Mr. Higgins, a Justice of the Peace, and consequently he *must*

know, assures us that one-fourth of the People are Paupers or Bankrupts, which is *the same* thing—

And if we're of the beggar-tribe,
We certainly may take a bribe ;
And then the man who bribes the most,
As certainly will rule the roast ;
And if so—" Bribery for ever, huzza !" .
Becomes the order of the day—

And Lord Vis-count Corruption,
I am your most obedient humble Servant.

And thus concludes Mr. Baines's plan.

The Old Inquirer, however, begs leave to observe, that this principle of Mr. Baines has neither a foundation in reason, nor grace, nor yet in common sense ; no, nor even in the corrupt precedents afforded us by mankind.

God alone glory, one Sovereign Lord, presides over the kingdom of grace : and his, be it remarked, is the happiest dominion to reside under : therefore to him be the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.—He says, " Children obey your parents, servants your masters, subjects your rulers ; and whoever resists the constituted authorities, (when not in manifest opposition to him) resists the ordinance of God, and shall receive to themselves damnation : " and this was found binding to Christians even under a Nero—this, therefore, is, to the Inquirer convincing. But Mr. Baines's principle, as it has no foundation in grace, so neither has it any foundation in reason : for if it had, children might judge their parents ; the poor the rich ; and fools the wise. It has no foundation in common sense, not even if numbers should be eked in to its aid ; for if it had, the common sense of Mr. Baines's toes, which are ten, might sit in judgment upon the common sense of *his head*, which is unity itself ; and this we conceive to be the only one of our propositions which is dubious. Nor even

in the corrupt practices of mankind does Mr. Baines's principle exist ; for there is not one government in the world, not even in America, where *universal suffrage* prevails.

The Old Inquirer, however, has strong reasons for suspecting after all, that it does prevail in one place. Notwithstanding the Devil's boast of pre-eminence, we know him to be a Braggadocio ; we know that the obligation to him must be a rope of sand, and that his authority rests only upon the depravity of his subjects' hearts ; and, therefore, we believe the principle we combat exists in force in hell, and in hell only. The Old Inquirer suspects, that these subjects are discussed there every morning in solemn Divan ; ever attempting, but never improving ; till they get into endless disputes, originating from the blasphemous suggestions of devils, and fight it out, as they did in France, in the afternoon ; and that they are never agreed except, like the democrats here, in doing mischief ; or, at least, he believes this will be the case when their opportunities of tempting sinful man are all over, and every one is rewarded according to his works.

And here, the Inquirer conceives, he has brought his reader to the most awful complex idea that will ever be realized ; but he imagines farther, that the inquiry we have been upon, so much courted by our opponents, leads to their complete discomfiture ; for leaving out the decisive injunctions of the Supreme, and hiding ourselves as far as possible from the light which radiates from the Sun of Righteousness, the great Redeemer of mankind, and following the dark lantern of pride, in which he assures us he has got the candle of reason for his guide, we shall find the only abstract principle which ever gave *rights* separate from those sanctioned by Scripture is, most manifestly, power. The fool has only the right to rule the wise man when he has the power to do it ; the poor cannot command the rich, because he has not the power to do it ; and the rich man, our governors probably will show us, is, upon these democratic

principles, a great fool when *he lets him* get the power to do it. All this Tom Paine himself allows; "all hitherto," says Tom, (in opposition however to his friend the weathercock, who goes evidently upon the old hypothesis, that "there is nothing new under the sun,") "all hitherto have been governments *over* the people." But Tom having got, like other quack doctors, as he imagined, a smattering from the discussions upon the American Constitution, of something that he thought would be new in England, had the vanity to proclaim himself one of the first suggestors of the Representative System. "Hear him, hear him, hear him!" cried Mr. Justice Higgins, Lord Milton, Sir Frank, and the whole *little* squad, till the Inquirer was forced to stop his old ears, from this well-founded surmise, that if he did not take care of his ears at *his* time of life, he would hear no more.

Well, Gentlemen, and what have you got by all this? said he meekly, soon as the hurly-burly was over. The Inquirer agreed to go with you, and to be directed by your dark lantern, your will-o'-the-whisp; he has done so, and the result is, that human reason tells him, that the Representative System is coeval with mankind; so far from being a secret of Tom Paine's finding out. For reason tells him, that our mother Eve, as soon as her pretty little Abel could run and prattle, (*Cain was a democrat,*) made him her representative, when she had washed his face, to fetch his papa Adam home to his dinner, when it was ready.—Don't take boggle, Gentlemen, at the Bible; for reason tells me, that this was true of the first inhabitants of the world, whoever they were; and that the Representative System has been in fashion ever since: to deny its existence or use, would be to libel the British Constitution, where it has existed for centuries; and the only question to be discussed is, how far it should be carried in different stages of civilization? How far in rising—how far in States at their zenith—and how far in falling States. And here we have certainly a

wide field before us. I believe we can fix upon no State where the suffrage should be *universal*. In a rising State, where few are *distressed* by poverty, it may safely be more general : in a State at its zenith, where there are more temptations to poverty, since self-defence is the first law of Nature, it should not be extended, but curtailed; and so on, acting exactly upon the safest principle of lengthening out life, which both reason and instinct dictate.

Now, Gentlemen, having wandered a long way in labyrinths, perhaps, of error, by the aid of your dark lantern, the light of your will-o'-the-whisp, you can have no great objection to our paying the Constitution of our country a bow—for after all, it must be a good Constitution to have weathered such storms as are past. The Old Inquirer, whatever planet he may then inhabit, will pay similar respect to any of the American Constitutions when it has done the same. Let us therefore pay our compliments to this venerable pile of maxims, laws, and usages; founded, confessedly, in part, upon Revelation, in part upon the deductions of human reason, and in part upon the exigencies of cases which have arisen in the course of its duration.

Mr. Fawkes pretends to be acquainted with it; but he has given no proof of discriminating attention to its excellencies—

“ All seems yellow to the jaundic'd eye.”

The British Constitution, at this moment, bestows the elective franchise of votes for the counties, upon freeholds of clear forty shillings a year; this, I believe, in law has been never varied. Mr. Fawkes, without entering into dispute about the various values of money, will certainly admit, that when this qualification was first allowed, a forty shilling freehold was at least equivalent to one of ten pounds now; and, in short, he may safely admit, that fifty of the people vote now for one then—where then the necessity of extending the

elective franchise? Will it afford greater security to property? Mr. Fawkes recommends annual Parliaments, and reminds us that they were once in existence; but does not consider that the whole of the business, at that time of the day, might be easily done in a month, and therefore a month's session in every year was quite sufficient. Let him place Kilburne's Manual for a justice of the peace, of his day, by the side of Burn's bulky volumes, and he will understand this better. In truth, the subject is so extensive, that the Old Inquirer cannot at present find time to examine it in all its bearings; he will, however, honestly confess, that he has not one word to say upon the Borough System, only that he suspects certain high Commoners, and noble Lords, are rather more shy of entering upon it, than the Old Inquirer himself, cautious as he is; and for no other reason than that they think it to be the *best stake in their hedge*; but, alas! alas! High Commoners and Lords are as often duped as other people; and by the men employed to do *their* dirty work, those men, who to make their pay an equivalent for their base services, smile in their faces, and pick their pockets.

But here fierce citizen Hunt, with his characteristic impudence, broke in upon the Inquirer. "I perceive, Sir, you understand the art of skying off, as well, to the full as any of the gentlemen you have described, but we have caught you at last in our trap, and we will keep you there. The representative system, Sir, is that by which the *people govern themselves*; here is none of your system of power over the people." *Hear him, hear him, hear him, hear him*—The hurly-burly was so great, that *Dick Honesty* placed himself firmly by the Inquirer's chair, with a good oak cudgel in his hand; *Sir Benjamin* leaned gravely over the other corner, and honest *Jerry* kept off the mob behind. "Are you sedate enough to understand this?" calmly resumed the Inquirer. "I am impatient to hear you," replied citi-

zen Hunt, half recovered from his fit of GREATNESS. “ Well, then, in the first place, take care you are not by and by, exalted above measure, at least higher than you wish. In the next, I beg leave to assert, that there is not a government under heaven, in which the people govern themselves ; no not one, in which even the majority of the people govern, except in that best way which I believe to be in force in England—I say there is not a government upon earth, where the majority choose their representatives. Examine well the American calendar; and you will find, that all is yet done by the minority ; but if it were otherwise, granting you all you can wish, a majority of *one* might decide it; and then the majority is a tyranny of every other man, which is the worst tyranny in the world—What will you flee to next? But, Sir, mark me well, under Mr. Pitt’s administration, and the Old Inquirer watched *him* with a steady eye, and ever since, generally speaking, the opinion of the people, as expressed by the mind of the people, (*Mens cujusque is est quisque*) the Old Inquirer has so little learning left that he must shew it: the unsophisticated opinion of the people, as far as it could be collected, has been the polar star by which the minister has directed his course ; and remember, O remember, Gentlemen, that the artifices of a faction are the only cloud that can obscure this. The Old Inquirer will be happy to look down from another planet, for he believes he shall then be usefully employed by the All-wise some where ; he will be very happy to contemplate the Sun of Righteousness, whenever he shall be pleased to take the lead of this star, and govern all, but hell, with his sceptre of peace and this he anticipates without a doubt, without a fear ; but he reprobates, and for ever will reprobate, all attempts to bring about this glorious æra, by *unrighteous means* ; and whenever he finds the saints coquetting with the D—l for this purpose, he will flog them with all his powers.”

Bravo, cried *Jerry*, and some few honest souls cheered the Old Inquirer with a most hearty huzza. Ah! said *Jerry*, when he saw some hang their heads and go away, the D—l's chains are strong ones, please your Honour, think whatever you may, there is something stronger than a rope of sand there. *Sir Benjamin* looked grave, even to solemnity. The *Old Inquirer* laughed—laid his hand upon his heart, and said, the “cheering” I like best is *here*, and they all shook hands once more.





